



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

330 HONDURANS DEPORTED FROM EL PASO LAST WEEK

The new Southwest Border Initiative aims to quickly return illegal aliens to their home countries

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers here last week deported 330 illegal aliens from Honduras under a new program called the Secure Border Initiative (SBI).

ICE officers in Albuquerque coordinated deporting 110 Hondurans each day on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of last week.

The Secure Border Initiative is a two-month-old program recently announced by Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff. One aspect of SBI allows ICE to quickly remove “other than Mexican” (OTM) illegal aliens to their home countries under an expedited removal process. Those OTMs removed from Albuquerque had been arrested by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) — which includes the Border Patrol — and ICE along the U.S.-Mexico border in Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.

Expedited removal is an administrative process aimed at reducing the number of OTMs who have spent less than 14 days in the United States, and who are apprehended within 100 miles of the border. OTMs apprehended under the expedited removal program are detained and quickly returned to their countries of origin after they receive travel documents. They are not required to appear before a federal immigration judge. Expedited removal reduces the time illegal aliens remain in detention awaiting their deportation from about 30 days to an average of 15 days.

“Using expedited removal will be a significant deterrent for those who contemplate entering the United States illegally,” said Robert Jolicoeur, field office director for ICE’s Office of Detention and Removal Operations in El Paso. “If these potential illegal border crossers are faced with almost certain apprehension, detention and quick deportation, we believe many will simply not try.”

OTMs arrested along the border in Texas, New Mexico and Arizona who are eligible for expedited removal are transferred to the Regional Correctional Center in downtown Albuquerque, where detention and removal officers coordinate flights back to their home countries.

Some of the Hondurans deported last week were returned on commercial flights and some were returned via the Justice Prisoner and Alien Transportation System (JPATS). JPATS is a fleet of aircraft managed by the Justice Department to transport U.S. and foreign-born prisoners within the U.S. and to Central American countries. Common JPATS destinations include: the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Columbia, Haiti, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Ecuador. It's a felony to re-enter the United States punishable by up to 20 years in prison.

Since the Secure Border Initiative was implemented Sept. 19, the ICE El Paso office has deported 805 OTMs who were apprehended along the U.S.-Mexico border in Texas, New Mexico and Arizona. That number includes 659 Hondurans and 146 Brazilians.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.